

NATIONAL ENTERPRISE AWARDS  County & City Enterprise Boards



Carol Lynch, joint owner of Crannagh, with the company's director Eamonn Flood



Mark Duckenfield, joint founder and director of Emergent Events

MAURA HICKEY

National Enterprise Awards finalists

Crannagh

When you think of international trade and business services, Cavan doesn't instantly spring to mind. But Michelle Lynch and her sister-in-law Carol Lynch, with their successful company Crannagh, have proved location isn't a barrier.

Former vice-president of the World Trade Association, Michelle Lynch said: "There's a vast difference between working each day at the World Trade Center in New York and commuting to my office in Belturbet. It feels a bit surreal at times."

Business partner Carol Lynch is a former head of KPMG Ireland trade and customs practice.

The duo's knowledge and experience coupled with their dynamism and vision has underpinned Crannagh's success to date. Founded in 2006, Crannagh focuses on international trade and customs support.

"Unlike the big four, we have the flexibility to work independently for various companies with no audit conflicts," said Michelle Lynch. "We are owner-led and therefore can project manage clients directly. Because we operate to a unique business model, we have been able to put together a team with professional, legal, accounting, industry, IT, engineering and revenue backgrounds, allowing us to meet clients' needs by tailoring expertise."

A year on and Crannagh, which has been supported by Cavan County Enterprise Board, employs a full-time staff of seven, including newly appointed director, Eamonn Flood, former director of Customs and Trade with PricewaterhouseCoopers, plus five associates. It has forged an association with a boutique legal firm in the US, which is one of the top three firms in international trade operating from New York and Washington. Crannagh also works with associate firms across Europe.

"Some 80 per cent of our clients are US companies and we advise them on international trade requirements," said Michelle. "We have 17 of the Fortune 500 and 12 of the top 100 private companies on our books, plus a number of indigenous multinationals."

"We advise on any customs, trade and/or regulatory matters affecting goods crossing borders – for example, goods moving into China or from Taiwan to the UK. We work closely with the Irish Exporters Association to keep companies updated on customs and trade matters and to provide training. We have also presented to Ibec, as well as the IDA," she said.

Flexibility is an important part of Crannagh's ethos. "We are pretty much available 24/7 and we also operate in different time zones. We have a well-established reputation with a lot of our clients, having worked with them in different capaci-

ties throughout the years," said Michelle Lynch.

For further information, visit: www.crannaghtrade.eu

Emergent Events

Mark Duckenfield and Conor McCarthy, founders and directors of Emergent Events, admit they were more surprised than anyone when Dublin City Enterprise Board not only agreed to meet them, but immediately offered support to their fledgling company in 2005.

"We went to see a representative at our local enterprise board. As neither of us had any business experience, we weren't sure what to expect, but Brian Davitt – who later became our mentor – was impressed by our idea and supported us with a feasibility grant and an employment grant. The support we have received from Dublin City Enterprise Board has really benefited us."

Duckenfield and McCarthy were friends from their college days, studying computer science at Trinity College Dublin. "After watching a group of street acrobats in Dublin's Temple Bar entertain hundreds of people, we gave up our regular jobs in October 2005 to set about building the largest street event in the country," said Duckenfield.

The event in question – Street Performance World

Championship (SPWC) – is now entering its third year, has already captured the imaginations of over 66,000 people and boasts a substantial sponsorship deal with AIB.

Primarily aimed at families and young people, the strength of SPWC lies in its ability to be inclusive, enjoyed as it is by people of all ages and social backgrounds. SPWC brings world-class street entertainers from all over the globe to perform in Dublin for free. Emergent Events hopes to expand the concept countrywide, over the coming years attracting hundreds of thousands of people over a number of weeks.

No strangers to awards, last year Emergent Events was awarded both the David Manley Entrepreneur of the Year award and also the Shell LiveWire Leinster Entrepreneur of the Year award for its business approach to a tourism product. The directors now hope to add a National Enterprise Award to their tally.

For more information on Street Performance World Championship, visit: www.spwc.ie

SEFtec

SEFtec was established in Carrigaline, Co Cork, to exploit opportunities in the offshore oil and gas industries, specifically within the area of safety equipment.

Managing director Colman Garvey said: "We recognised

the potential to develop purpose-made, innovative training products for the offshore industry. Through research we became aware that while training schools were being built throughout the world, only a small number of companies had the ability to develop products that satisfied the needs of end users in the market, for example helicopter simulators, designed specifically to suit the needs of end users in this defined sector. We also discovered that the lead times offered by suppliers of purpose-built simulators for the safety-training sector was very long."

Darren O'Sullivan, engineer manager and director of SEFtec, said: "Those involved in oil and gas exploration recognise that extraction activities need to adhere to best practice in all aspects of operations and production, as it has the potential to cause severe damage should things go wrong – including loss of life. For this reason the industry places emphasis on adequate and proper safety training for its employees."

SEFtec was established to meet these needs. With the assistance of the South Cork Enterprise Board, the business commenced trading in 2004 and now employs 11 staff.

The raw materials for the helicopter simulators are locally sourced or, in the absence of a local supplier, the product is sourced nationally. SEFtec uses the services of two special-

ist engineering workshops in Co Cork on a contract basis. Approximately 70 per cent of the work undertaken by these specialists is based on overseas contracts.

O'Sullivan and Garvey believe SEFtec's key strength is its ability to provide clients with an innovative turnkey service to satisfy their needs from design stage to commission-

ing, as well as flexibility and competitive pricing. The strength of the business is enhanced by the combination of Garvey's skills in design and engineering and O'Sullivan's skills in automation, resulting in the design and manufacture of innovative products.

Having outgrown its original rented industrial units, the company purchased a site from

Cork County Council and developed a purpose-built manufacturing facility.

So far, SEFtec is established in the US, European, Asian and Middle East markets, but over the next two years it will broaden its base to include customers in South America, Australia and Russia.

For further information visit: www.seftec.ie



Colman Garvey, managing director of SEFtec

MAURA HICKEY

Mulberry Stoves hot contender

Peter Hughes and Billy Hogg set up Mulberry Stoves in 2003, having identified a gap in the market for high quality cast iron stoves. They believed they could develop products and provide customer service that would set them apart from the competition.

Pointing out that a Mulberry stove uses half the fuel of an open fire, has low emissions, and burns sustainable fuel, Hughes said: "It's a product whose time has come."

Based in Carrick-on-Suir, Co Tipperary, the Mulberry range now includes stoves, cookers, and pellet boilers. Mulberry Stoves has been nominated for a National Enterprise Award by South Tipperary County Enterprise Board.

Both Hogg and Hughes worked for 20 years in the cooker and stove business. Both were employed by Waterford Stanley: Hughes was the production director and Hogg was sales manager. A number of their former colleagues are now with Mulberry, giving this young company a considerable knowledge base.

An industrial engineer, Hughes holds a Master of Science degree from UL. He believes that innovation is the way forward and acknowledges the support of the South Tipperary County Enterprise Board. "We have invested €250,000 in a new enamelling



Brian Bowe, who is on the staff of Mulberry Stoves

MAURA HICKEY

facility and we couldn't have done this without their support," he said.

Mulberry products are now available in 130 stores across Ireland, and are exported to the Baltic States and Russia.

Mulberry Stoves employs ten staff, and the new enamelling facility will see an increase in this number. The company

has achieved some of its early goals: becoming the second-largest supplier of stoves and cookers in Ireland within three years of startup, establishing an in-house design centre and attaining ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certification.

"Long term, our plan is to establish and strengthen the Mulberry brand in the Irish

and EU markets as high quality environmentally-friendly products. This will be achieved by extending the roll out of Mulberry in-store centres, combined with international expansion and constant product innovation," Hughes said.

For further information, visit: www.mulberrystoves.com

Feet first for new company

Catriona Kelly and Anna Marie Horgan of Kerry Footwear and Orthotic Specialists (KFOS), Tralee, know how to put their best foot forward. Nominated and supported by Kerry County Enterprise Board for this year's National Enterprise Awards, the business was established in April 2006 and provides a unique facility integrating a specialist foot and ankle (podiatry) clinic and a gait analysis laboratory, together with comprehensive footwear stores.

The company's flagship Feet First stores are based in Tralee and Killarney and carry an extensive selection of shoes including orthopaedic, sensitive feet range, athletic, dress, casual walking and work shoes, as well as an extensive range of off-the-shelf specialist insoles.

"The business combines exceptional products, unique advanced in-store technologies, expert opinion, and unmatched patient-education to help provide an outstanding retail experience for our customers," said Horgan. "Feet First was the first high street shoe retailer to introduce a scientific approach to customising footwear with insoles in Ireland. At Feet First the latest video and pressure mapping technology is used to enable customers to interact with the uniquely designed 3D Fit System to achieve the ultimate custom-fit shoe solution."



Catriona Kelly and Anna Marie Horgan of Kerry Footwear and Orthotic Specialists (KFOS)

MAURA HICKEY

The company also runs a specialist biomechanics and gait analysis clinic, using digital video gait analysis to diagnose and treat foot, leg and lower back pain or injuries associated with faulty biomechanics. The clinic treats people from all walks of life, from children through to the elderly and has a particular interest in runners, athletes and recreational sports enthusiasts.

At the clinics in Tralee and Killarney, qualified podiatrists perform minor surgical procedures, prescribe orthopaedic footwear, provide biomechanical and diabetic assessments and treat sports injuries.

KFOS has developed a number of programmes including a corporate employee programme, a diabetic foot programme and a sports gait analysis programme. It has

also produced a number of catalogues including a medical footwear collection, a residential care collection and a safety footwear collection.

KFOS aims to become the market leader in the burgeoning foot health market, already estimated to be worth half a billion euro in Ireland and Britain.

For more information, visit: www.feetfirst.ie